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# The PULPIT

*A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching*

DECEMBER 1946


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# Sermon Illustrations

*Contributed by Readers o*
THE PULPIT

### Still—'Good News'!

Let those who would be pessimists take heed what the Spirit says unto the churches. Professor Latourette of Yale, lecturing at Andover Newton Theological Seminary this fall, gave five notable facts about present-day Christianity. (1) It is more widely distributed than ever before. (2) It is more widely planted than ever before. (3) It is more widely influential than ever before, considering mankind as a whole. (4) The trend toward unity is the greatest in the history of the church. (5) There is a deepening conviction of the power of the gospel —Good News.—*Arthur M. Gillespie, Congregational Church, Northbridge, Mass.*

### The Peril of Hatred

When Leonardo da Vinci was beginning work on his immortal "Last Supper" he had a quarrel with his fellow-painter. So enraged did Leonardo become that he conceived and carried into execution the plan to paint the face of his enemy into the face of Judas. As he painted he doted upon the thought that his revenge was the more sweet since the influence of his act would be remembered for generations. The face of Judas was one of the first to be finished and everyone could recognize the face of the artist's enemy. All went well until he came to paint the face of Christ and then he could make no progress. Something seemed to be holding him in check and frustrating his best efforts. Then it came to him—the hatred in his heart which had been painted into the face of Judas was impeding his work. So he painted out the face of Judas and commenced anew on the face of Jesus, with the magnificent result which the ages have acclaimed.—*L. L. Dunnington, First Methodist Church, Iowa City, Iowa.*

### The Miracle of Missions

At the beginning of the 19th century the little island of Kussie, in Micronesia, was a place of savagery and brutality. After suffering first at the hands of American whalers, who discovered the island and brought syphilis and broken homes and then kidnaped and killed native men and women, came the Spaniards. They were no better than the whalers. Kussie was depopulated from 2,000 souls to 200 in a short time. However, missionaries came, and finally a footing was secured; the seeds of the gospel were planted.

In 1935 Mr. and Mrs. Willard Price, journalists, visited the island while it was under Japanese mandate, and they were given the following facts by a lonely American planter. During the 65 years previous to 1935, there had not been a single murder on the island, although formerly there had been 100 a year. There was no jail. No liquor among the native Christians. "If any man drinks," said King John, the chief, "every man's hand would be against him." No divorce. Disease at a minimum. No work on Sunday. Poverty not allowed, nor loafing and swearing. Life was rich and promising. The Kussian church sent out native missionaries to surrounding islands, and gifts of great worth. And, during the recent war, it was reported that the natives saved the lives of many stranded and wounded Allied service men.—*Roy S. Buffat, First Presbyterian Church, Centralia, Ill.*

### The New 'Gold Rush'

Have you read of the new Gold Rush of 1946? People are madly rushing out to Crescent City, California. Miners have reported their findings, and the crowds are gathering. Machines run on the trail once frequented by the horse and donkey. How suggestive it all is! The old lust for gold is with man still. And when he gets his hands on it, it usually means that the Hand of God is not on him. We do not pour out our wealth for the Christ of Bethlehem. We spend millions on ourselves and our notions, and let the church beg for support. At this critical period in history, men are too concerned about prosperity and depression. Our spiritual poverty is already a fact. The wisdom of Christmas knows that Christ is more to be desired than gold. We are his stewards when life worships at Bethlehem.—*Roy L. Tawes, Silverbrook Methodist Church, Wilmington, Del.*

### The Bible in Russia

The Bible is being read in Russia, according to a report given the American Bible Society by Louie D. Newton, president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. Newton was one of the seven-member delegation which visited Russia at the invitation of the Soviet government. "You will be glad to know," Dr. Newton reported Bible Society, "that several R soldiers came to me and said th not only got Testaments supp them by the Society when the prisoners of war, but they kn thousands of others who did also lieutenant showed me his copy he received while a prisoner o and told me that 'it was the r of this Book while I was a pr of war in Germany that led Christ.'"

### The Cross—and Beyond

I saw a photograph the oth which captured my imaginati was a view of the altar in a chapel at the front of Franz glacier at Wailo Gorge in New land. A large plate glass w backs the altar so that the wor may look beyond the altar cross towering snow-capped mountain stretch for miles in the di There in the background is th majesty of God's creation and foreground is the cross, symbol same majestic creation as it fou pression in One Man's life.— *E. Higgins, First Congrega Church, Sylvania, O.*

### Abundant Living through Service

In an article, "An Old Wa New Life," which Fulton O wrote for the *Christian Hera* relates three incidents of peopl viously unhappy who, because were willing to reach beyond selves in service to others, fo way to abundant living. The story is that of an elderly woma had given up hope in life b "there is nothing to live for." found herself by taking flowe those who could appreciate the she reached out to help othe helped herself. The second stor a "hapless, tall, bony and awk college student who found hap when she forgot herself and c trated her attention on those her. And the third story tells alcoholic who found joy and st in living when he tried to sho other alcoholic the dire inf liquor had had on his own lif deep was the impression made o self by this act that he found way for his own life.—*Sam M First Methodist Church, Jen La.*

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# The Pulpit

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

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# Beauty for Ashes

By CARROLL E. SIMCOX

THE GOSPELS it is recorded that Jesus, after s baptism and temptation, returned to his home e, went into the synagogue on the Sabbath, and proper time stood up to read. He chose the ıg verses of Isaiah 61 for his reading: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

The congregation was astonished by his choice of a scripture. For it was all in the first person singular, and the young ıter offered no explanation: it sounded as though re making the words of the prophet his own.

### *THE WORLD'S 'HEIL-BRINGER'*

en Jesus clinched the matter. Having closed the he sat down, and after a tense silence he an- ed: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your So he *did* mean what he seemed to imply: he pplying the venerable prophecy to himself! Thus e formally announce his advent as the world's *Bringer*. Nobody in the congregation that day go home complaining that the service had been as usual"! It turned out to be a near-lynching. that moment forward, Joseph's eccentric son was on to be watched.

fortunately, our minds are so diverted by the ıt impact of Jesus' words upon his townsmen, its dramatic sequel, that we tend to overlook the themselves. Why did he choose this passage? ously, because it describes to perfection his mission earth. And for that reason we need to read it eed it most carefully. We need moreover to read ically, for if we do not we shall miss its import y or altogether. By a critical reading I mean, proper attention to the scripture's original pur- and specific reference: that is, seeing the text ı its context.

### *ISAIAH AND JESUS*

e prophet Isaiah (whether the "first," "second," d," or *"nth"* Isaiah makes no difference for our ıt purpose) was speaking to a particular situation. elt himself called of God, in his day, to proclaim to his suffering countrymen that God had looked in pity upon their woes and was about to set them on their feet again with their faces toward the sun. He was going to call home the exiles, heal the wounded, set free the captives, and give to his afflicted people "beauty for ashes" and "the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." This was to take place at a particular time and place.

Then, half a millennium later, comes Jesus, with his own message and mission. Times have changed; the scene has shifted; the personnel is different. But Jesus takes the words of Isaiah and applies them to himself and to his own work. History is repeating itself—but this time with a very notable difference: Isaiah's prophecy concerned a particular situation in history; but Jesus' prophecy, though cast in the same words, is both particular and universal in its application. Isaiah was sent by God only to the children of Israel, at the time of their deliverance from Babylon. Jesus is sent by God to all the children of men, and his mission is for the duration of time. In a word: Jesus addresses his promise and prophecy at once to the people of his time and to the people of every generation yet unborn.

### *JESUS' WORLD PROGRAM*

What, then, does Jesus promise in his prophecy?

The gospel is to be preached to the poor: the "good news" that God has visited his people, in person, to make available his salvation to all men of good will. The "poor" are they who are of this good will to receive what God offers them: that is, they desire salvation from their sins and look hungrily to God for the unspeakable gift of his pardon and love and gracious help.

Healing to the brokenhearted. Henceforth it is to be made known, to all who have ears to hear, that "earth hath no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal."

Deliverance to the captives. The cruelest chains that shackle men are the chains of sin and death. Henceforth there is no release from these for all who desire it.

Recovering of sight to the blind. Up till now it has been hard even for the holy to see God. But now God appears in flesh and blood, for all to see. The scales are struck from mortal eyes, and man may behold the glory of very God in the face of Jesus Christ.

To set at liberty the oppressed. There is no tyrant like unto a spiritual tyrant within one's self. Witness the slave to a neurosis! Now is offered freedom from the spiritual oppressor within the gates of Mansoul.

To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. In Virgil's famous "messianic prophecy," the fourth Eclogue, the great pagan poet, writing roughly half a century before the incident in the synagogue at Nazareth, had proclaimed: *magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo*. "Now the great cycle of the ages is born anew."

Virgil prophesied not knowing when, and in whom, his prophecy was to be actually fulfilled. (He is nonetheless a prophet of God for that.) But it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ: Virgil's *magnus ordo saeculorum* is the acceptable day of the Lord which Jesus at once proclaims and ushers in. It is the new age upon earth, the dispensation of grace. The ancient and seemingly endless night, which set in when man was cast forth from paradise, is now in sullen retreat. A new light is breaking. The Sun of Righteousness arises, with healing in his wings.

### *JESUS COMES—TODAY*

As we read these stirring promises it is well, indeed imperative, to remember that this is not ancient history. The words were spoken in a synagogue in Nazareth long ago; but their reference, their bearing, their relevance are strictly contemporaneous. *This* day—Advent, 1946—this scripture is fulfilled in our ears.

The advent of Christ is an historical event. That is, it is something that actually happened at a particular time and place. We rightly emphasize that. Christianity is, first, last and altogether, a historical religion. The late William Temple reminded us that "Christianity can never be dissolved into a series of beautiful ideas; it is rooted in an historical person, who lived at a definite point of space and time and was 'crucified under Pontius Pilate. . . . '" Or, to use a phrase of recent coinage and to apply it specifically to the historic Incarnation: the advent of Christ is "holy history."

But there is this special characteristic of this, and all authentic "holy history": it is history that never can become history past and gone. Christ came "in the fulness of time." But that "fulness of time" is perpetual. He *comes*. He comes, now as then, to "as many as receive him." And he comes bringing the same gifts from heaven which he brought then. In Isaiah's glowing phrase, he comes bringing "beauty for ashes."

### *SIGNIFICANCE OF ADVENT*

Each year, during the four weeks leading up to Christmas, the church proclaims and celebrates the advent of Christ. Liturgically the Advent season is a preparation for the coming of Christ at his nativity, a time pre-eminently for a spiritual housecleaning to make ready our souls for the coming of our royal guest. If it is only "meek souls" who "will receive him still," then we must sweep out the dust of our pride and the cobwebs of our conceit before he can come in. Historically the church has emphasized repentance during Advent, and rightly so. Advent is very properly a penitential season, but we must clearly understand the purpose of our Advent penitence: it is the positive purpose of making our lives temples worthier to receive him.

Undoubtedly most people, even good Christians, have trouble grasping one—*the* one—essential fact about Christ's advent, and that is that he comes constantly, momently, to everybody. This isn't just pious rhetoric, as though his real coming was ages ago but his spiritual (or imaginary) coming—the thing only preachers talk about, and for homiletical purposes only —is simply a pleasing and edifying illusion whi experience in our more pious moments. The b most of our devotional thinking and practice false distinction, which amounts to an outright a sis, between the "real" and the "spiritual." We in most of our discussion of the question of the presence" of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Yo somebody say, "I believe Christ is *spiritually* p only"—by which he means that, in his view, C not *really* present.

Now, every Christian must understand that Lord is indeed spiritually present, then he is as and really present as he was in the synagogue at reth on that Sabbath long ago. Otherwise, the quering Lion of the Tribe of Judah is a dead lio the proverb that declares a live dog to be bette a dead lion is nowhere more relevant than right point. Unless Christ be not only risen but ev ingly alive and present, we are of all men most pi

### *BRINGING BEAUTY FOR ASHES*

Now, as ever, Christ comes bringing beau ashes. He reveals to us, in his own person, the character of the holy and eternal God, and that he gives to our blinded sight is beautiful beyo telling. For the ashes of speculation about G gives us the radiance of the divine Reality. F ashes of our futile, bungling, foredoomed effo save our own souls he gives us the beauty of salvation, by which God comes to us—once we ceased striving to climb to him—and offers us restored fellowship and friendship with him.

What peace can be likened unto the peace of ciliation to God? The beauty of God's consolat the broken heart; the beauty of freedom from bo to lust and vicious habit; the beauty of God's now available to us in measure more than suffici make us more than conquerors over all things- even death itself: all these beautiful blessings a gifts of our King at his coming.

But of course his gifts cannot be given unti are accepted. And it is the tragedy of our age, every age, that men are strangely reluctant to them, to receive God's beauty for the ashes of pitiful self-sufficiency, self-love and self-will. can the matter be? Whose fault is it?

### *HUMANITY SPURNS ITS KING*

Partly, no doubt, it is the fault of those mis ones who spurn the beauty of the King. It *is* fu cast pearls before swine. The King makes dema his coming, and imposes terms of his peace; an still love the darkness more than the light when works are evil.

But it is partly also, and one fears very la because we who own his name are ourselves poo nesses to the beauty of our King. For one thin have taken unto ourselves all too little of wh has offered us: we too, we who "profess and cal selves Christians," have taken little from him his name. *Peccavimus!* And then, all too comm we try for some strange reason to hide the beau our King within ourselves. We are so despe

ous not to try to "force our Christianity" upon rs! As though it would be bad manners and big- on our part if we were to obey his marching orders s: "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I "! We Christians must get over that coyness of , in this our day. We must be at least as good tles of Jesus ("sent-ones") as our communist con- oraries are for Karl Marx.

his very year appears to be a critical one for istianity. It is no time for a weak witness. Let y Christian ask himself, in all soberness of spirit, Advent: How much of the beauty of my King I taken unto myself? And then: Am I letting light within me "so shine that men may see. . . " ?

# Christ Our Priority

**By MATTHEW C. CAVELL**

*e is prior to all, and all coheres in him. Colossians (Moffatt).*

UR FIRST and last, our perennial and eternal job is to declare to men today, as Paul did to Colossians of his day, the priority of Jesus Christ. he Roman world gave priority to military might to government by law and order administered when necessary by an iron fist.

Greece elected to give priority to philosophy and ethics and to the beauty of form both in literature and in sculpture. Paul superimposed upon these priorities, worthy as they were in many respects, the priority of Christ in whom the best of the past coheres and the best of the future is enfolded as the oak in the acorn. Listen to this hierarchy of priorities ascribed to Christ: "He is prior to all, and oheres in him. He is the head of the Body, that is, he church, in virtue of his primacy as the first to orn from the dead—that gives him pre-eminence all."

hat is quite an imposing catalogue of excellence: r, Head, First, Primate, Pre-eminent! Raise all ues of excellence, goodness, mastership and leader- to the *n*th degree, and the problem posed by the finds its answer in the timeless Christ. His crys- character completes the most exacting equation of fection the choice spirits of the human race ever ished. Christ is Prior, Head, First, Primate and -eminent.

his conception of Christ is explanation enough for bold and confident statement Paul made to the lippians: "In him who strengthens me I am able anything." He faced obstacles as insurmountable he leap from one bank of a river to the other would to the best jumper. The chill streams of indiffer- e, pagan ideologies, sin, the degradation of human- kind were foreboding and forbidding. They threatened to engulf anyone who dared to divert the course of the murky waters by the slightest degree. Behold what happened to those who attempted to change the course of human events by superimposing upon them the divine intention. The prophets of Jehovah had to escape to their hideouts, Socrates drank the hemlock, John the Baptist's head was brought to Herod on a platter, and Christ was impaled on a cross. But Paul saw, as George Bernard Shaw put it, that though men "crucified Christ on a stick, he somehow managed to get hold of the right end of it." In the faith of this enabling Christ, Paul essayed these swollen and sullen waters and established his beachheads at Corinth and Ephesus, at Athens and Rome, to mention but a few of the strongholds that had to give ground before the assaults of his indomitable faith.

Paul was able to accomplish the impossible because he believed implicitly and unconditionally in the Lordship of Christ for whom the impossible was a shadow, a passing cloud, and at most a tomb that might vaunt its seeming reality for a period of three days. But the last word was not with these appearances of power but with the power of God declared in Christ who was Prior, Head, First, Primate and Pre-eminent. This is the Christ who enabled Paul to transport the gospel to every shore, letting loose the spirit of Christ before whom mighty Rome herself was impotent, as Sholem Asch so effectively records in his great book, *The Apostle:* "See you not what has happened in Rome? The more they burn the believers in the Messiah, the more they fling them to the beasts, the mightier grow their numbers."

This is the Christ, the Pre-eminent Priority, we must recapture today if we in our time are to be enabled to attempt and achieve the gargantuan tasks which lie before us. Christ must become our priority as he was Paul's. Then the revolutionary changes which took place in Paul's life will occur in ours. Let us see what happened to Paul when he gave Christ priority in his life.

## I

For one thing, the center around which this microcosm, Paul, revolved was the Son of God. Search the mind, the will, the heart of Paul and the great theme one encounters in this Christ-centered person is—"For me to live is Christ, to die is gain." Yes, his thoughts, his desires and his deepest urgencies gravitate around the Christ as the constellations and the planets revolve around the sun.

William P. Merrill tells the story of a Negro pastor who spent seventy of the ninety years he lived preaching. He had delivered more than ten thousand sermons from a single text. Dr. Merrill appeared skeptical about the veracity of this story until he heard what the text was. This is the text of the ten thousand sermons: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Upon hearing the text the beloved retired minister of the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York made this significant comment: "What else is there to preach about? That is what counts, now and always. If we Christians have the mind of Christ,

we shall transform the church—we shall push the cause of world missions—we shall find our real joy in serving the Kingdom of God."

Ten thousand sermons cannot exhaust this text, for it is as inexhaustible as Christ. Ten thousand times ten thousand sermons cannot render the text threadbare because it is the essence of the Christian faith. To have the mind of Christ is to possess a set of values which will revolutionize life—literally, actually. That is a transforming relationship which will make us see all things through the eyes of Christ rather than through the eyes of self. Like the character in Hugh Walpole's *Roman Fountain* who declared that if he had not known about the divinity of Christ, or had never heard about him, but had chanced to come upon the Lord's Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount and the story of the crucifixion, "I would have cried out: Here is a man like no other man who has ever been, and in realizing him I go beyond all earthly, physical things into the world of the Spirit."

How many of us are toying with the mind of Christ! How many of us are bothered with Paul's theology because we lack his Christology! For Paul, Christ was priority without reservations. Because Christ was "prior to all" for him, he not only laid hold upon the power which completely transformed him, but gave him an outlook and an outreach with which history has had to reckon.

II

How then did Christ, as his priority, affect Paul's outlook?

That Paul was a strict Jew adhering to all the legal, ethical and religious requirements of his faith is clearly attested by his life up to the time of his conversion experience on the Damascus Road. He was a ferocious antagonist. He set out to lay waste the church. The law was for him a sacred trust and he would defend it at the cost of his life, if need be. His people were the elect and those beyond the pale of God's chosen people were the Gentiles who were to be tolerated, but between them and his people there was an insuperable wall.

But when Saul, the antagonist, became Paul, the protagonist of Christ, all the walls of partition were torn down. His cramped outlook expanded with vast and all-inclusive horizons which the mind of Christ gave him. The Jew, who had been forbidden to make any graven image of anything, had made the law and the minutiae of the legal code his peculiar idolatry. In spite of the prophets' universal message religion was made an exclusive rather than an inclusive force.

How gloriously all this changed under the impact of the priority of Christ upon Paul's life! The law is dead, the letter kills, only the Spirit gives life. The bondage of the law was broken by the freedom of Christ's spirit and by the effectual working of God's grace. "For by the spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free." Gone was the distinction between class and class, race and race, master and slave. In the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, Paul discovered his full emancipation. This was plicit in Judaism but Christ had made it explicit be any doubt: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, is neither bond nor free, there is neither male female: for ye are all one in Christ."

There in a few brief strokes we have the re tionary change which took place in Paul's ou when Christ became his priority. There too we the promise of the change which will take place we make Christ our priority. Is there any ch we need more in this day of suspicion and fea the international scene, and of friction and strif the national level? Our walls of partition bet race and class and group are among the most dama indictments of our faith. We have denatured the by twisting it to fit our peculiar and often p practices. But where Christ is given priority hideous walls of separation and segregation hav go in order to make way for the all-embracing ou of Christ.

A young worker did not conceal his hostilit Christianity to the head of a workers' high scho Sweden. The principal asked the young man wh he was opposed to Christianity because Chris worked for peace and justice in the world or be Christians preached neighbor-love. "No!" the y man replied, and then added after a thoughtful pa "I guess that what I resent in Christians is not they are Christian, but that they are not Chri enough!"

Is not that the real trouble with all of us— Christian enough"? Is not that the reason why C is not our priority—"not Christian enough"? W the Christian outlook becomes really Christian, barriers and walls of partition disappear.

Branch Rickey, president of the Brooklyn Dod signed up the Negro Jackie Robinson to play s stop on the Montreal team, one of the farm clu the Dodgers. When Mr. Rickey was asked wh had done this unprecedented thing in the anna professional baseball, he replied: "I'm doing it be I can't help it. I cannot face my God much lo knowing that his black creatures are held separate distinct from his white creatures in the game tha given me all I call my own."

That will happen when priority is given to C in baseball, in business, in the professions and in churches. "I dream of the day," Marion Ande the great Negro contralto, is quoted as saying, "w there will be a better understanding among pe When I sing, I don't want them to see that my is black; I don't want them to see that my fa white—I want them to see my soul. And th colorless."

When Christ becomes our priority, life's hor the meeting of earth and sky, is beyond and incl of all lines and divisions of race, caste and creed frictions, strife and suspicion. These find their sol in the all-encompassing love of God. Give Christ ority and he will change not only the individual his outlook, his philosophy and his behavior, all of w soon take on a dimension of depth which reaches to all points of the compass.

III

ow did Christ, as his priority, change Paul's out- as well as his outlook and his own personality? n Christ became Paul's priority he was imbued a new sense of mission. He became the church's and greatest missionary. He came into the pos- on of something so vital, so dynamic, so transform- that it completely changed him and his old out- and irresistibly sent him on a world-changing on.

say "irresistibly" advisedly. Saul had his preju- and cherished a national and racial superiority plex that might well match some of the recent essions of this horrible malady: "Seeing that many after the flesh, I will glory also. . . Are they rews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. they the seed of Abraham? So am I."

ut now with Christ as his priority Paul crossed ms and oceans, mountains and continents, to de- the love of the crucified Lord and the redemption e cross. The zeal of the Lord consumed him and, to Christ, he became God's most glorious "ex- able."

our missionary zeal for the redemption of men nations a mere flicker when it should be a con- ng passion? Well, our failure to reach far and is due to the fact that we have not made Christ priority. Is our giving to the church and to its d-wide mission a paltry trickle when it should be w of sacrificial concern for the multitudes who in darkness and for the hundreds of millions who now on the verge of starvation? This would not if Christ were our priority. Is the world being tered to pieces by explosives of suspicion, ill will, ion and sin even after the shooting has stopped the droning of planes over defenseless cities has d? This would not be so if Christ were our ity.

nemy bombs destroyed the cathedral at Coventry, land. On one of the cathedral walls which had concealed when centuries earlier a chapel was d to the main structure, there was a painting of nead of Christ. No one seemed to know anything t the existence of this painting. After all, if a ting of the head of Christ stands in the way of gger and better cathedral even Christ will have ive way to progress, won't he? But when the bombs tore the old historic structure apart and chapel wall fell away from the older structure, e for a brief period was revealed the concealed ting of Christ.

ur sense of mission is concealed between walls of ference and of partition. The recovery of the rity of Christ will blast all of these walls and e our honeycomb living to become mansions of iousness that will shelter the world. Christ is nic explosiveness to sin. Where he is prior to all, Head, the First, the Primate and the Pre-eminent, must become Paul, his outlook must be pushed to the farthest horizon and his outreach must ket the earth like God's merciful heavens canopy creation. For "Christ is prior to all, and all co- s in him."

# The Man of the Years

**By EDWARD C. DAHL**

*We beheld his glory, . . . full of grace and truth. John 1:14.*

WHAT is religion? Most people approve of religion. Ministers recommend it. The word is often on our lips. But it is a most difficult thing to define. What do we mean when we speak of "religion"?

Few of the many definitions that have been given are satisfying. The most adequate we have was given by the prophet Micah, centuries ago: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Religion, said Micah, is justice, by which he meant a man's integrity and honesty as well as his impartiality. Religion is kindness, which includes mercy, forgiveness, understanding and love. And religion is humility, the open and teachable spirit that sees beyond the world of things the realm of the spirit and the power of God.

One man in human history perfectly fulfilled this definition. It is of him I wish to speak today. I have never seen him, and yet he is more real than many people I have met. He is my friend, although I do not know what he looks like. Should he come to Brattleboro, our lives would be changed. We might be made uncomfortable but we would be the better for it. Even at the distance of centuries, he has an irresistible power to draw men to him, to cleanse their hearts and lives and to show them God. This man, as you have already concluded, is Jesus of Nazareth.

### *A MAN FOURSQUARE*

Jesus was utterly honest. His life was straightforward, his face open and sincere. There was nothing covered or "shifty" about him or anything he ever did. He took no moral short cuts. He clipped no corners. Everything about him was foursquare. He had none of the craft and guile, commonly called "tact," of the successful politician. It might have been better for him if he had. For then he would perhaps never have gotten into trouble. But also, he would never have been the Savior and only hope of the world.

He hated sham and pretense. When a man said flatteringly, "Good Lord," he answered quick as a flash, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good, save God." "Blessed is the womb that bore thee," cried a woman as he passed by. "Not so," he replied. "Blessed are they that hear and do the will of God!" For his followers there were to be no long prayers in public places and pretentious exhibitions of piety.

Jesus could not stand hypocrisy. When he met men who cloaked the meanness and evil of their hearts with

holy words, he spoke with savage directness: "You are like tombs, white without but full of dead men's bones and uncleanness within. You look like lambs, but underneath you are ravening wolves." He was a man of honest and economical speech. You find him using no long oaths, protesting the truth of a lie. His "yea" was "yea" and his "nay," "nay." There was in him no flattery, and none of the "white lies" that sap our moral manhood.

He held that inner motive and outward action must conform. Merely keeping up the appearance of good, or the outward form, was never enough. "Moses told you," he said, "that you must not murder and must not commit adultery. But I say unto you, do not hate; do not look at a woman to lust after her. If you do that, you have already broken the law." Life for him was honest. It was whole and sincere. So he condemns all the pious pretense and holy fraud that has been perpetrated in his name from that time to this. "It shall not be so among you. Such a man is not worthy of my kingdom."

### *AN UNDERSTANDING OF PEOPLE*

Jesus understood people. They were drawn to him as to a magnet. They loved him, crowded around him wherever he went, and always wanted to be with him. Children and grandparents, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, saint and sinner—they were all there. We read again and again that "he had compassion." That means that he felt with and for people. He had an uncanny way of understanding a person and putting him at his ease. In Samaria he talked with a woman at the well. When he finished speaking, so well had he understood her that she went into the city and told her friends, "Here is a man that can tell me everything I ever did since the day I was born."

Notice his carefulness for his mother. He provides for her future as he hangs dying on the cross. "Son," he says to the disciple he loved, "here is your mother." "Mother," he says to her, "behold your son." He has the same understanding and consideration in dealing with women who weren't all they should be. A woman taken in open adultery is brought to Jesus. "He who is sinless among you, let him cast the first stone!" Then, as the men slunk away, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go in peace."

A person could count on Jesus to understand. That day in the house of Martha and Mary, Martha was right, according to her narrow perspective. She had been working. Her sister hadn't. But Jesus saw the other side of it, too. "Martha, you are too busy and worried. Mary has chosen the better part. Leave her alone." On the last night of his life, a band of men came out to take him. It was Jesus who noticed that Peter had cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. He stopped in that hour of crisis and healed. Who else would have done that?

Jesus always understood. He understood the young ruler who wanted to break away from enslavement to his fortune. He was sorrowful when the man couldn't win that victory over himself. He understood a maniac of whom it was said that seven devils possessed him, so violent he had become. He sat down and talked to him as to one in his right mind, was so. He understood the soldier who reco an authority like his own. There was an imm meeting of minds between Roman and Jew. Peter, that impetuous disciple, denied his Lord had foreseen that it would happen, and after all over he gave Peter such a look of forgivene understanding that the only thing left for P do was to go out and weep bitterly. A ma and paralyzed is brought to the synagogue. sees straight to the root of his malady. He d say, as the bystanders expected, "Get up and He said "Thy sins are forgiven thee." He knew was wrong. He understood. Thus he offered to the greatest gift man can give to man.

### *GOD KNOWN AS A PRESENCE*

Jesus was close to God. To him, God was problem to be discussed. God was a presence, a He had a complete and contagious certainty o People saw this. When they met him they kn themselves, and often for the first time, that G real. *God was there!* The whole world wa with signs of God's presence—flowers, birds, they all rested in his care. Jesus talked to G to a friend—before dawn—during the day, and end. He was constantly breaking out with "F even in the midst of a conversation, so natura his prayers. He saw things that were conceale the worldly wise and revealed to those of simpl —as to babes. "You must become like childre would say. He was alert to the splendor of the and had a childlike appreciation of the prese God.

He hated anything that hid God from men's The only time he was violently angry was t on which he entered the Temple in Jerusale saw worship made a commercial transaction. house shall be a house of prayer, and you have it a den of thieves." Then he cast them fr temple—the men who had made a profitable b out of man's reverent approach to God. "If destroys the faith of people," he said, "it wo better for him if a millstone were tied about h and he were cast into the midst of the sea."

At the end of his long ordeal on the cross he still say, "Father, into thy hands I commit my He was close to God!

### *GOD IN A HUMAN LIFE*

Here, then, was a life lived in complete ob to God's spirit and purpose. "I and my Fath one." "It is my work to do the Father's will." was working through a human life, in perfect ha with him to save the world. "We beheld his says John, "glory as of the only-begotten of the full of grace and truth." That was it! Fathe and Holy Spirit—they were all God, strangely ent, yet one and the same.

This man was indeed one of whom it can that he perfectly fulfilled Mica's definition of r He did justly—he was honest. He loved mer understood. He walked humbly—he was close t

very December *Time* magazine selects some prom- figure to be "the man of the year." The editors ys explain why they make their choice. The man 945 was President Truman, they said, largely use they couldn't think of anyone else who was tter candidate. Roosevelt, Churchill, even Hitler 1938) have been "men of the year." Only Roose- repeated. He was chosen three times.

ch "men of the year" come and go. They are forgotten. But in all history there is only one idate for the "man of the years." At his coming, was changed. We speak of "A. D." and "B. C." rs make their impression and vanish. He is still ork, challenging and drawing men to better life, granting them his presence on their way.

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is he,
And faith hath still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

### *CHRIST LIVES!*

ke no other figure in history, Christ lives. Once meet him you cannot be rid of him, even if you to! You may think you will shut him out. You try to forget all about him. But still he insistently nds that you follow him. Francis Thompson found this to be true when he wrote "The Hound leaven."

I fled him down the nights and down the days,
I fled him down the arches of the years, . . .
But with unhurrying chase
And unperturbéd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy . . .

he demands of Jesus will not be quieted, for he ks with the voice of conscience. He demands that give yourself to him and his service. He demands sty like his, in place of the polite lies that make ost of our conversation. He demands understand- like his, in place of our usual impatience and peration. He demands closeness to God, in place our wandering after every will-o'-the-wisp we k will bring us pleasure—our foolishly standing e, as if we really were the captains of our fates the pilots of our souls.

e does not ask these things easily or lightly. Such sty as his is difficult and often costly. Such under- ding is painful, perhaps impossible. It is a shocking that good men should take the sin and pain of world on themselves, the innocent suffering for guilty. Such closeness to God does not come ugh spiritual carelessness or the selfish temper of lar living. He does not ask this service lightly. those who follow him find life—abundantly.

We would see Jesus—in the early morning;
Still as of old he calleth, "Follow me";
Let us arise, all meaner service scorning;
Lord, we are thine, we give ourselves to thee.

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IFE, like the Father's house, is full of "many ns," and every man who seeks the beautiful, the , and the holy may find the room where these gs are.

ROY L. SMITH.

# The Mind of Christ

**By DANA McLEAN GREELEY**

*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ. Philippians 2:5.*

PAUL was writing to one of his favorite churches, one established on his second missionary journey, and his first church in Europe. He wrote the people intimately—they were "lights in the world"; they were his "joy and crown." They had not presented problems that some of the other churches had presented. Though they were a poor people, they were noted for their liberality; and they appeared not only to be loyal toward Paul, but to be earnestly striving to live a Christian life. Consequently in his letter he did not have to scold them, but merely to encourage them and to confirm them in the ways to which they were already accustomed.

*Bachrach*

"Fulfill ye my joy," he wrote, "that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ."

### *CHRISTIANS NOT IN NAME ONLY*

They understood his message and they responded to it. They were real Christians—that is to say, they accepted a pattern that was not of this world, and they tried to fit their characters and their conduct to that pattern. They were not Christians because they had been born into what we call today a Christian community, or because their parents had been Christian before them, or because it was easier to be a Christian than not to be a Christian. They were not Christians in name only, or solely on the basis of their being listed on a church roll, or even of attending worship. Certainly they were not Christians because they had been baptized, or confirmed, or because they recognized the authority of Rome; for although the prison from which Paul wrote this epistle was very likely a Roman prison, Rome had no authority at that time, and had not dreamed of having any. Nor were the Philippians Christians in the sense of having subscribed to any creed, for there were no creeds, and the dogma of later centuries had not yet developed. But they were Christians in the sense that at great sacrifice they were espousing an unpopular cause, and were filled with enthusiasm over the good news that was brought to them, and were measuring their lives by Christ's.

I fear that Paul would not be able to write as intimately, or as confidently, to us in Boston, or to the people of most of our American cities, or of the cities

of the world today, as he wrote to the church at Philippi. He would have to write as he wrote to certain less beloved and peaceful communities, perhaps more as Jesus preached to the scribes and the Pharisees, and as John of Patmos wrote to the church of the Laodiceans: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. . . . Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable," and so on—he would have to write more like that to us, putting aside the gentle suggestions and the affectionate words of approval. Our churches today are very far removed from the experiences of Paul and of the first Christian communities. To most of us the Galilean and his teaching mean relatively little.

### *OUR MODERN PAGANISM*

Let Paul then speak the more loudly; let him challenge us the more forcefully. For never was there a time when the mind of Christ was more needed than it is needed in this hour. Whether he still writes from the prison in Rome, or whether he be transplanted and write with deep spiritual conviction and religious zeal from a nazi or Japanese concentration camp of a year or two ago, he must deplore all manner of strife, and condemn the lust for power, and discount the value of the goods of this world, and exhort us to practice humility and brotherly love. He must despise the paganism—and under that category he would put much of the Christianity of our day, the paganism that is among us—more in some ways than he despised the paganism of the first century of our era.

For so many of us, regardless of our church affiliations, are basically materialistic in our philosophy, and provincial in our outlook, and prone to build our world around ourselves, and to think, if not more highly of ourselves than we ought, at least more exclusively of ourselves than we ought. We are barbaric in our sense of values, in our pursuit of pleasure, in our toleration of vice, and in our current attitude toward international affairs—barbaric in that we are uncivilized, and unconscious of the higher purposes and spiritual affinities that bring men together and perfect their characters.

We will not Christianize our civilization until we Christianize ourselves. The politicians of America are fully as much in need of missionaries as the illiterate population of the Orient. How often in China or in India a good Buddhist or Hindu is referred to as a real Christian, thus being marked as a man of faith and love and purity, whereas according to the same standard the Western world is regarded as having betrayed Christianity again and again.

### *A PARAGON OF PERFECTION*

One man was true, said Emerson, to what is in you and me. One man went far in realizing the high possibilities and the divine destiny of the immortal souls of men. The stature of the fullness of Christ portrays that human perfection which he himself bade others to achieve even as their Father in heaven is perfect. The Galilean is an example for us. Let this mind be in you, said Paul, which was also in Christ. We be the plight of our world, but the plight of our wor due to the deficiency of the men and women make up that world, just as the condition of a s community, or of a single family, is determined the character of the people of that community, or members of that family. And the only salvation can come to the United Nations, or to our munic ity, or to our age, is the salvation that is effe through the renewing of the minds, and the rectif of the characters, and the Christianizing of the of individuals, in both their so-called private and s affairs.

Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature. Le acknowledge the influence of the home upon his "These commandments," said the law, "which I mand thee this day, shall be upon thy heart, and shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and talk of them when thou sitteth in thine house." had been taught the commandments. He had sa his mother's knee, and had learned the meanin faith and love and purity from her. He had wo with his father in the carpenter's shop and h the stories of old. Later he talked with the docto the temple. He was conditioned outwardly and wardly for the task that was his. He resisted tem tion; he pursued an intimate acquaintance with who pursued him; and he gave his life freely fo fellow men.

### *THE MIND OF CHRIST—FAITH*

What was the mind that was in Christ, that sh be in us also? Let us briefly describe three o characteristics. The first is faith. As by faith A ham went out not knowing whither he went, an by faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the w of the king, but enduring as seeing him who is invis and as by faith Samson shook the pillars of the h of the Philistines, so by faith Jesus renounced kingdoms of this world, and by faith he healed people, and by faith he called his disciples and cha them to preach the gospel, and by faith he mar into Jerusalem, and by faith he suffered the c Through all his life, and in death, he was guided impelled by his faith in an unseen order, and by sense of the nearness and the unfailing power of Where most men are skeptical, he believed in reality of the spirit, and he lived as though he belie

Such faith, such belief constitutes the very fou tion and motivation of successful and heroic liv Paul's faith had two elements in it, equally import It had the element of mysticism, the awareness of Infinite, the assurance that underneath are the e lasting arms; he felt God's companionship on the hand, and he was persuaded on the other that th God's world. "If God be for us, who can be ag us?" as the apostle put it. But there was added to the element of responsibility and of will. He beli in God, but he did not believe in God to the exclu of believing in himself and in man. He recogn himself, as he would have us recognize ourselves the instruments of the divine—co-workers with if you will, creators with him of his Kingdom

teousness and peace. It was no irresponsible theism Jesus professed, but it was one that laid a very y burden and obligation upon his mind and con- nce.

Ve need the mind of Christ today in terms of a l faith in the reality of God, and the ultimate thwhileness of human life, and the inescapable onsibility of men. We need the companionship he eternal, moral and religious principles that are iolable, and duties that are mandatory.

### *HIS LIFE A DISCOURSE ON LOVE*

The second characteristic of the mind of Christ that uld be in us also is love, or utter unselfishness. As he nciated his parables he understood whereof he spoke. illips Brooks has called preaching the transmission truth through personality. Jesus preached as power- a sermon as has ever been preached when he told parable of the Good Samaritan; for there was hing of the priest or the Levite in him, but he bodied as he proclaimed the spirit of sympathy, therhood and good will. His entire ministry was iving discourse on love and the unity of the human nily. His heart went out to his beloved disciple n, and to Zacchaeus, and to Mary Magdalene, and the woman taken in adultery. He knew no barriers t could separate him from his fellow men. All o touched him because of his sympathy had their ngth restored, and were lifted up. He did nothing ough strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind l through the power of love. He had no desire to lauded above others; he said, the Son of Man ne not to be ministered unto, but to minister. His igion meant feeding the hungry, taking in the anger, clothing the naked and visiting the sick. nasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," was standard that Jesus represented God as applying his children.

### *ERASING THE BARRIERS*

How far are we ready to go today in erasing the rriers that divide the Samaritans from the Jews, l the Jews from the Christians, and the Catholics m the Protestants, and the black and yellow from white, and the German, or the Russian, from the nerican? Are we Christian? Can we emulate the nd of Christ? Or are we inclined to think as the arisees did that our particular little group, our sect, r nationality, our social class constitutes a chosen ple? Are we nazis and fascists? or are we univer- ists and democrats? Shall we shut people out of r lives? Or with love shall we have the wit to n, and draw a circle that will take them in? And se who hunger, and are without clothes, shall we e them of our surplus? toss them our gold? or ll we give them of our love and ourselves, as Sir unfal did on his return from searching for the oly Grail, and find that by that giving we and ey are made one, and the world is at last redeemed? There is nothing that can redeem the world except e in human hearts, such love as will unify the nily of man. Men and nations can be brought together by fear, and they can be brought together through treaties and agreements, but there is no security and no reality in such union. Love is the only medium through which they come really close to one another. If love doesn't win, the atomic bomb will; there are no other contenders. We need love and unselfishness as they characterized the mind of Christ.

### *'CLEAN HANDS AND A PURE HEART'*

And finally, let us cite the purity that was in his mind and in his heart. There was no uncleanness, no insincerity there. He detested hypocrisy in all its forms. Cleanse first, he said, that which is within the cup and the platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. And you remember how he talked about a man's thoughts, if evil, being as offensive as evil deeds. His spirit was utterly free from vulgarity and profanity and falsehood. The psalmist had sung of old, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." Jesus was that man. He was wholesome and highminded, as well as a very human and devout personality. He was uncorrupted, and seemed incorruptible, absolutely genuine, and without alloy.

We need that kind of purity and wholesomeness today, that thoroughgoing sincerity. We need to hallow our lives in order that we may consecrate them in the service of high ends. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." Christianity has precedent for driving money-changers from the house of God, and it requires as firmly the cleansing of the temple of the indwelling Spirit.

The Christian mind is characterized by a vital and dynamic faith, and by a love that seeks not its own and endureth all things, and by a purity and sincerity that enable it to see God, and to be thoroughly trusted by other minds.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ."

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IF LIFE is to be enriched by the gifts of science we must set ourselves to learn the rules. In a world that supplies its gifts through the cooperation of many specialists, we must learn to work together. To use our science we must train ourselves with increased thoroughness. Survival in a competitive world requires that every person contribute as he can to the needs of his community. Alive to the value of service for the common good, we will each learn how to do his part, and we will find a way to work with our neighbors in making a better world. We seek for wisdom and faith and courage to use our God-given powers for establishing peace and enriching the life of man.

ARTHUR H. COMPTON.

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I AM a frightened man. All the scientists I know are frightened, for their lives and your life.

HAROLD C. UREY.

# The Unchangeable Christ

By CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY

*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. Hebrews 13:8.*

THERE are some texts which frighten the preacher and yet haunt him. They seem almost too great to preach on, and yet also too great to neglect or omit. Here is one of those texts. No matter how often a man might preach on it, he would leave it feeling that he had touched only the margin of its vast continent of divine truth. When you pronounce this text, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever," a great chord is struck and great harmonies are evoked. The full chorus of the Christian faith sounds in your ears. All the music of the patriarchs, the prophets, the martyrs and the holy angels, the music of Creation and Incarnation and Redemption, the music of the final triumph of Christ, when great voices shall be heard in heaven saying, "Alleluia, Alleluia, for the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

Standing on a mountain side in Kentucky, and looking across the narrow valley to the wall of mountains on the other side, I could see jutting out from the fresh green of the trees of the virgin forest an enormous rock. Through the valley below flowed toward the Ohio the Big Sandy river. For countless ages that mighty rock has been looking down on the river as it flowed seaward. Every movement, every hour, every day the river had changed. It was never the same. But the rock had remained the same from age to age. So the stream of time, ever changing, flows past the changeless Christ, the Rock of Ages.

The ruling idea of this Letter to the Hebrews is the immutability of Christ as a Redeemer from sin. The inspired author contrasts, first of all, the changeless Christ with the ever-changing universe: "The heavens shall wax old as doth a garment and as a vesture thou shalt fold them up, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." Then he contrasts the immutability of Christ as a Redeemer with the succession of high priests and the yearly offering on the Day of Atonement, when the high priest went within the veil to sprinkle the mercy seat with blood. But Christ is the Eternal Priest. His sacrifice will never be repeated. He offered himself up on the cross, once for all.

The writer then contrasts the immutability of Christ and his kingdom with the passing kingdoms of this world. They are shaken down and removed; but Christ's Kingdom is a kingdom which cannot be moved. Then in a beautiful and tender passage he contr the immutability of Christ as a friend and compar with the passing friendships and relationships of world. He had called the roll of the great heroes faith, from Abraham and Moses down to the later He speaks, too, of the friends, pastors and teach of those to whom he is now writing. Many of th had been removed; and not a few, no doubt, by martyr's death. Their friends who were left w sad and heavy-hearted. But in contrast with th passing teachers and friends, Christ is the immuta Friend and Companion. It is in this connection t the inspired writer flings out the grand assertion this text: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, too and forever."

In the old days when men used to ford the swol rivers, a rider who looked at the flood was apt become dizzy and fall from his horse, and be sw away and drowned. But if he fixed his eye upon so distant and immovable object, a jutting rock on hillside, a great oak tree, or a mountain top, he ca through in safety. On this journey of life you an must cross many a swollen stream, and we live to in a world that is swept by mighty floods of char It will be good, therefore, for us to fix our gaze up this immutable and eternal Christ, the same yesterd today, and forever.

## I

### *CHRIST IS IMMUTABLE IN HIS PERSON*

He is the same today that he was yesterday; the sa yesterday as he is today; the same tomorrow, and f ever, that he is today, and that he was yesterday.

He was the same yesterday. How far back t yesterday carries us! Before the foundations of earth were laid, and before the mountains were brou forth, Christ was the eternal Son of God. Before morning stars sang together and the sons of G shouted for joy, Christ was all then that we kn him to be now. He was the same when man fell, a the first promise of his advent as redeemer was giv that the seed of the woman should bruise the head the serpent. He was the same when Abraham rejoi to see his day; when Moses wrote of him; wh Balaam saw his scepter rise out of Israel and his s out of Jacob; when David sang of his everlasti kingdom; when Isaiah described his passion and dea when John the Baptist called him the Lamb of Go when the star of Bethlehem halted over his incarn tion; when he spake the parables of truth and wrou the miracles of mercy; when he was denied by Pe and betrayed by Judas and expired amid curses a darkness on the cross. He was the same when he r the third day from the grave and ascended into heave the same when Stephen saw him standing at the rig hand of God; when he appeared to Paul at the ga of Damascus, and when John saw him standing am the seven golden candlesticks on the Isle of Patm

He was the same when Augustine and Chrysosto and Calvin and Luther and Whitefield and Spurge and Moody preached his gospel to sinners. He was t same when your father and mother loved him a followed him. He was the same when you confess

ame and gave him your early love. All that he yesterday, he is today. Jesus Christ, the same day, today, and forever.

II

### *CHRIST IS IMMUTABLE AS A TEACHER*

great philosopher once said that man's three great ons are these: What can I know? What ought lo? For what can I hope? Christ as a teacher ers all three questions. Man can know God se he can know Christ who reveals him. His is to do the will of God; and what he can hope life everlasting.

a teacher, as one who answers life's great ques- Christ never changes. This is in contrast with her teachers. Human systems come and go; the uded science of today may be the jest of tomorrow. Christ abides the same. One of the striking things the teaching of Jesus is that you cannot think ingle saying of his that has been rendered obsolete e passage of time. "Blessed are the pure in heart." ye first the kingdom of God." "Judge not, that not judged." "Love one another." Which of sayings is out of date or obsolete today? What taught on the shores of Galilee or on the banks e Jordan, he teaches today on the banks of the nes and the Ohio. What he taught in the streets richo or Capernaum or Jerusalem, he teaches in the streets of London and New York and urgh and Chicago. As a teacher he has stood sfully that severest of all tests, and that foe of ror—time.

nat Christ said about God, the soul, sin, heaven ell is ever the same and ever true. As long as eart has passions, as long as life has woes, as long n has hopes, the words of Christ will speak to his Nothing that has transpired, nothing that has done or said or taught or discovered in the nine- centuries which have passed since Jesus spake to on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, has raised the est question as to the truth of that utterance of Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words never pass away." He towers over the wrecks of He is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, ginning and the end of wisdom and knowledge, e alone has the keys of death and of hell.

III

### *ST IS IMMUTABLE AS A REDEEMER FROM SIN*

e cross is an eternal *act* as well as an eternal *fact*. ches back into all eternity, for Christ is the Lamb od slain from the foundations of the world. It es forward to the eternal ages, when Christ is r the Redeemer of his people; for when the ws and doors of heaven are pried open for us little by the inspired pencil of St. John, that is usic that we hear floating down upon our ears; s the song that stirs us, the song of redemption sin: "Now unto him that loved us and hath d us from our sins in his own blood."

nerever you see Christ in the Scriptures, he is the r from sin. There are those who seek to tell us today that this is not the real Christ, that he has been foisted upon the church by ecclesiastics, theologians and metaphysicians, and that we must get rid of him and go back to the real Jesus of history. Since all my hope rests upon this Christ, I want to know whether or not he is the real Christ, and the same yesterday, today and forever. To whom shall I go? I will go to the archangels who sang his praise before the foundations of the world, and I will say to them: "Raphael, angel of reason, Uriel, angel of light, Michael, angel of the sword, Gabriel, angel of holy song, is the Christ whom I believe and trust the same whom you adored?" And all heaven echoes with their answer, "He is the same!" I will go to Abraham, who rejoiced to see his day, and to Moses who wrote of him, and I will say to them, "Is the Christ whom I follow the same whom you foretold?" And with one voice they answer, Abraham from Mt. Moriah, and Moses from Mt. Sinai, "He is the same!"

I will go to David and I will say to him: "David, sweet singer of Israel, is the Christ in whom I trust the same about whom you sang?" And with all the music of the Psalms David answers, "He is the same!" I will go to Isaiah, and I will say to him: "Is the Christ whom I trust the same of whom you wrote, who was wounded for my transgression and bruised for mine iniquity?" And with all his seraphic eloquence Isaiah answers, "He is the same!" I will go to John the Baptist, and I will say to him: "Is the Christ whom you hailed by the banks of the Jordan as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, the Christ in whom I trust and believe?" And with his great wilderness voice John answers, "He is the same!"

To whom else can I go? I will go to John, and I will say to him: "Is the Christ in whom I trust the Christ upon whose breast you leaned at the supper, and whom you saw on the Isle of Patmos in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks?" And with all the music of the Apocalypse, with all its trumpets sounding, John answers, "He is the same!" I will go to Paul, and I will ask him: "Is the Christ in whom I put my trust the Christ who appeared to you at the gates of Damascus, and for whose sake you endured prison and sickness and exile and scourging and shipwreck and loneliness and death itself?" And with the music of the third heaven to which he was once admitted, Paul answers, "He is the same!" I will go to that thief who repented on the cross, and I will say to him: "Penitent thief, is the Christ in whom I trust the same who said to thee from the cross, Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise"? And with the voice of the redeemed, the dying, but now forever living, the thief answers, "He is the same!"

Where else can I go? I will leave behind me all the ages of Christian faith, and standing before the throne of God I will ask the whole company of the redeemed, those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: "Is the Christ in whom I trust the same to whom now you sing your praise and adoration?" And with the seven-fold chorus of heaven they answer, "He is the same!"

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever! There is another word that I would like to add to that great text: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, forever, and for *you*. I have spoken about Christ. Now let me present him to you!"

He is the Christ for your yesterday. Have there been mistakes, blunders, failures, disobedience, hardening of the heart, lost opportunities which now you cannot find, no, not if you seek them carefully and with tears? Have there been words spoken which you would like to withdraw, but now cannot? Have there been deeds done which you would give all you possess if you could undo them? Here, then, is the Christ for you. The Christ for your yesterday, the Christ who said, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."

He is the Christ for your today. Are there heavy burdens that you are bearing? Are there trials, losses, sorrows, wounds, temptation, loneliness, fightings within and fears without? This then is the Christ for you. He is all-sufficient for your today, and he invites you to come unto him and cast your every care upon him.

He is the Christ for your tomorrow. Yesterday, today, forever! Who can tell about that tomorrow, that unknown world, that undiscovered continent over which lies the shadow of uncertainty? What we know is that there must be separations, that the strength and pride of life will pass, that our kingdom of this world will fade from our vision. But here is One who can lead you safely through that unknown future. He is the changeless Christ. Whatever tomorrow will bring, he will be there with you. Tomorrow cannot separate you from him, for he has said, "Lo, I am with you alway." And you can answer, "Who can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus?"

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. Have you finished the sentence? If not, will you finish it now, today? Will you put your name there, after his? Will you say: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, forever, and *for me*"?

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THERE is only one way out of the new peril. It is the way we preach about every Sunday in every church in America. That way is to turn really Christian toward the world—to make a nation-wide effort to lift the rest of the world up to our level of abundance. That would be matching our words with our deeds. It would be new, startling; for no nation ever tried it before. This plan might be announced to the world as "America's Policy for the Atomic Age."

FRANK C. LAUBACH.

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THE GREAT NEED of the hour is to strengthen the forces that unite, to build bridges of mutual understanding across the widening gulfs of suspicion and distrust and fear, to center man's attention and loyalty upon the power of cooperative effort for the achievement of purposes common to all mankind.

FREDERICK MAY ELIOT.

# How Far Is It to Bethlehem?

**By THOMAS MEGAHEY**

*And it came to pass, when the angels went a from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to other, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord made known unto us. Luke 2:15.*

ONE OF the most gripping advertisements th have seen in a long time appeared in a nati magazine several months ago. It was sponsored b airline. The advertisement showed a picture of a h and buggy jaunting along a country road; over

was a modern plane, thunde along at four hundred miles hour. The faces of the driving the pony and the p revealed purposefulness — were both going places. caption was in the form searching question, "How f an hour?" According to horse, it would be twelve m according to the plane, it w be four hundred. Obviously answer to the question is, "I depends upon how you tra

As the days go by, the hours of yesterday becom the minutes of tomorrow; for our world is fast be ing smaller and our hours are becoming superhighw which embrace, not our nation, but our universe. far is an hour? Certainly that depends upon how travel. Is not that the answer to the question w constitutes our sermon topic, "How far is it to B lehem?" That, too, depends upon how you travel.

Many persons are traveling the road which lea the general direction of Bethlehem, all of them as how far it is. Certainly our hearts today are asking same question, for most of us are anxious about distance.

How far is it to Bethlehem? Well, the dist means nothing—the important thing is, how are going there?

It has always been that way in the realm of m Distance has been measured by the spirit of man. sider "how far it is to Bethlehem" by watching va groups as they travel toward Bethlehem.

I

Let us consider the setting for this, the greatest in all history.

Away up to the north was a city called Nazareth was a peculiar city; peculiar, because there not onl religious world met, but also the commercial w Nazareth was located on the caravan route from through Nazareth to the Lake of Gennesaret. would be the logical result, men of all nations and ples would meet in that city. Men busy with an life than that of the Israelites would appear ir

ts. They would bring strange tales and news of ff lands. People would get a touch of the cosmo- an flavor of life.

n the other hand, Nazareth was also one of the t centers of Jewish temple life. As most of you v, the priests which ministered in the temple were led into classes; and, whether for communion or wship, they would travel together in large com- es. Such a group would meet in Nazareth on their to and from the temple far to the south.

he result of such a criss-cross of life and influence ld be strong ties, strong convictions, strong commit- ts. A protected life rarely yields strong convictions eep loyalties. Life in Nazareth was not protected, here were a variety of currents and undercurrents fe converging in that town. On the one hand, the of the commercial world, with its accompanying tations, and, on the other hand, the sacredness of a as custodians of the truths of Jehovah. There d be no compromising in that town. You lived and d by your convictions. People from such an environ- would be brave, straight-spoken, intensely national extremely proud as well as impulsive.

s we watch them leave the town for the home of ancestors, to register there, our attention is caught Hebrew couple who seemed lost in their own ght. They were of the poorer type. This fact was enced, not by their appearance, but by the offering later brought to the temple. They had entered into red covenant together; they had pledged their love fidelity to each other—a vow which, in that day, to be made in the presence of two witnesses and d not be broken until they had been married, and it was intended that it should be carried on ughout their wedded life.

ortly after their engagement, Mary told Joseph she was to be a mother. As a just man, Joseph apprehensive. What should he do? The visitation e angels, however, dispelled any fear or misgiving d together they started for Bethlehem. What ge and confused thoughts must have been going ugh their minds in the days of travel! But always thoughts kept going on toward Bethlehem.

he short winter day was fast drawing to a close n the two travelers from the north finally came into lehem. With them they had brought the few essen- things needed for living. Mary's heart was happy— Son was to be born here! In the fondest expecta- she had already procured the "swaddling clothes."

he way had been very long—at least three days' ney. What a sigh of relief Mary must have given e entered the city of her fathers! The pressing lems of rest and shelter thrust themselves upon the in vain. There was no room in the inn. God in visdom had planned it so—and I am glad, for the ness and solitude of the manger hid the sanctity Christ's birth. It could not have been so in the with all its merry-making and commotion.

he people of Bethlehem, that night, were a long off from witnessing the greatest fact of all time. e became incarnated in human flesh; but the people ethlehem understood it not.

## II

How far is it to Bethlehem? There was another group asking that question. It was a group of shepherds. They were watching the flock of sheep on the hillside. How strange! But these were no ordinary shepherds. (Ordinary shepherds were under a rabbinical ban). It would be impossible for their sheep to be demanded as sacrifices at the temple.

For these shepherds were not ordinary shepherds. They watched over their sheep from their Migdal Edar—a watch tower. Strangely enough, the prophets of old told that the first public announcement of the Messiah would be from the Edar, the watch tower of the flock. (Genesis 35:21; Micah 4:8)

It was while the shepherds were in their watch tower that heaven and earth met, in dazzling splendor; the glory of the Eternal seemed to enwrap them and cover them as the Shekinah glory of former years did to their fathers. The announcement was made—Your Messiah has come . . . in Bethlehem of Judea . . . in a manger. He is wrapped in swaddling clothes, the mark of poverty and lowliness; but he is the Light for which the world has long waited in darkness. This is the tidings of great joy—not only to you, but to the world; for in the City of David a Savior, the Anointed One, has been born.

Immediately, as if heaven could no longer contain itself, a choir of angels began to sing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace—among men, good pleasure."

Only once before in sacred history had the song of angels fallen on the ears of mortal man. Isaiah saw the Lord God, high and lifted up . . . his train did fill the temple . . . and the glory of Jehovah swept the court. He too heard the hosts of heaven as they sang: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts." *Then* the angels told of the coming King. *Now* the angels tell that he has come.

These shepherds, faithful to their common tasks, were looking for their Messiah. They too had asked, "Where is the promise of his coming?" That morning, as the cooling winds swept the Bethlehem plains, they heard the angels sing: "Unto you a Savior—for all men!"

Little wonder that they forgot their sheep and went to Bethlehem. There, in a manger, they found a child. Nay, they found more—they found One whom they could worship.

Love became incarnate in human flesh—but the people of Bethlehem understood it not.

## III

How far is it to Bethlehem? There was still another group asking that question. They were astrologers coming from the land of the Euphrates. They had traveled far from the lands of the Chaldeans.

It was common knowledge that when a king was born, some strange phenomenon was revealed in the sky. These men had followed the star; bearing gifts. they had traveled afar over mountains, plains and valleys. For days they had followed the star. Now they came to Jerusalem, the capital of the country.

Surely, there is the place where a king would be born. But what a travesty awaits them there! Herod afraid, the religious people indifferent. But a called meeting brought the verdict that six miles south was a little town called Bethlehem, and the prophets had said that "a King would be born there who would rule my people Israel." So to Bethlehem, guided by the star. And they found him in a manger. And they fell down and worshiped him, giving to him gold—the treasure due kings; frankincense—which the priests used in their office; myrrh—a valuable spice for burial purposes.

They had come to Bethlehem and there they found love incarnate in human flesh—but the people of Bethlehem understood it not.

IV

How far is it to Bethlehem? Still a fourth group was asking that question. Herod asked the question of the scribes and chief priests—where? Then, secretly calling these wise men from the East, he asked them to go to Bethlehem and seek out this one who may threaten "my throne . . . then will I come." But Herod never got to Bethlehem—for the distance was too great.

Yes! It is true that they came from the north, the south, the east, to Bethlehem. But those within the town, and in Jerusalem, only six miles away, never got to the inn or the manger.

For the distance to Bethlehem is never measured in miles. For Bethlehem is not a geographical location, but an experience in the heart of men—when God reveals himself to human hearts in the message of his love. For Bethlehem is God's declaration that he has become man—that men may ascend up to God.

Christmas then becomes the symbol of the Eternal trying to knock at our lives for admission. Against the frailty, the indifference, the formality, the stupidness and slowness of our minds to understand—he would enter our lives!

Going to Bethlehem steadies us in a drunken world; it rescues us from the tyranny of things; it gives back to us our childlike hopes and dreams. It washes away much of the hurt and pain; it gives to us the promise that some time, somehow, we shall see—"that the whole world will send back the song which now the angels sing. . . . "

How far is it to Bethlehem? It is a long way now, but it can be reached! It is a rough road of faith, penitence, tears—but it is a road at the end of which stands Eternal Love, searching my heart, weaning me from my smallness, challenging me to brave the heights—and there, at Bethlehem, God in Christ stands as a pledge of his love and faith in *me!*

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark street shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

Let us go now to Bethlehem—*shall we?*

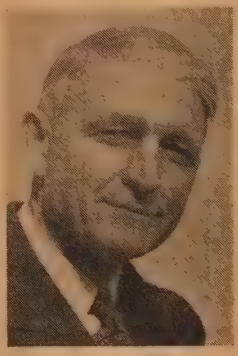
# An Expectant World and the Sons of God

By RALPH TEMPLIN

*Even the creation waits with eager longing for sons of God to be revealed. Romans 8:19.*

THE CHRISTIAN church and the world wa the birth of the children of God. Too long have been content to be mere sons of earth.

Many now despair that man, even with God's can save his world. No wonder! Has a dark day been possessed by darker pair? Count Keyserling wa after the First World War if a spiritual basis was not fo for the world-wide cult which science and invention brought forth, our present c zation was doomed to dest tion. After the Second W War most such thinkers do even raise that *if*. They do find any such spiritual bas sight. The one world of sci was never so broken into hu fragments. And never was factionalism so danger Human despair was never so complete.



### *A FALSE HOPE?*

Some people, facing this thickening gloom f quarter of a century, have been saying that we retrace our steps in the matter of what we have lieved about God's Kingdom. The idea of a King of God in life and on earth was in error. Men m get along in a wicked world by developing a commu of light in the midst of the darkness. It was that w Jesus intended and that which the early church bec But the hope was false, they have said, which tho to lead the world of men to conform to the will of even partially in the sense of a Kingdom of God or earth. God's chosen ones, living in the world but of it, are to be finally snatched out into the King prepared from the foundations of the world. But world has revealed itself as inherently evil and lost there is nothing to be done about it except that sons of God should save themselves from a wicked eration.

But "God so loved the world. . . ." How reco God's creatorship of the world and his love and con for it with the obvious fact, so far as man is concer that the world denies and thwarts God at every turn seems so utterly out of his keeping and control?

Such despair is nothing new. Again and again pe have forgotten that God made his world for man, n man for his world and from the first called about self his family of spirit-motivated children, ransomed of the Lord." They have accordingly f ioned for themselves some tower of human progress a remarkable way this age, as a material world, pu

house "clean and all in order." But it was left "vacant." God was not in it. So it has come about that we are vexed with many diverse spirits which came in to dwell and have torn our life asunder. Of course, man is evil when thwarting God. An age which thwarts God is an evil age. But the world is not intrinsically evil, nor is man. The world waits for the sons of God to be revealed. We have to work together with God to realize our human destiny.

### *CREATION THROBS WITH PAIN*

The world was sore stricken in Paul's day. He, too, was faced with the problem of a day which seemed to thwart everything which God desired for his world. We are greatly perplexed by our world torn with strife, stricken with sin, threatened with destruction. Christians of Paul's day were perplexed with their world. That is why he wrote this wonderful passage (Romans 8) for the Christians of the Roman world. The creation was God's. His love for it had been supremely revealed. And yet the whole creation seemed to be so completely out of his control. Such was the problem which haunted these early Christians. It is the same which haunts the Christian of our day.

Paul has a striking twofold answer as applicable to our need today as it was then.

First, he says that the creation is rendered futile through no choice of its own but by the will of God. And second, he says that only the birth of the children of God can heal the world's wounds and fulfill the purposes of creation. Here is both personal assurance and a message of hope for a needy society. God is in all working out his greater glory through his sons, which shall be revealed.

### *A FUTILE CREATION*

Let us consider how the creation has been rendered futile by the will of God. This does not mean that God desires that his created work should destroy itself and come to naught. Paul is clear that the creation exists for the higher fulfillment through the revelation of the sons of God. He has much to say about the "new creation," a world ruled by love, the Kingdom of God growing up out of God's creation, a Kingdom of God on earth. But when the creation tries to work itself out with conscious process, setting God at naught, it is self-destructive. Without God, even that which is life-giving—God's very breath of life—becomes destructive of the life it would create. Of what does God's breath of life consist?

There are two higher urges, beyond the basic instincts, which can be seen running through the whole of the living creation. God's creature-world has developed and maintained itself as it has held these two urges balanced in due proportion. It has destroyed itself as they have been allowed to pull life over to either extreme. These two great urges are independence or self-assertion of the individual and interdependence or grouping together. Under God's guidance, in the independence through interdependence of the divine family-hood which exalts the intrinsic worth of the human soul as child of God, these two in balance have been very "breath of life" to the creation. Without that creative balance or when God has been left out in their application, they have become ugly, destructive scourges of all life. First, let us see them as God-ordained, life-giving urges.

### *TWO FUNDAMENTAL URGES*

The self-assertive urge makes for adventure, trying of new things, pushing upward and forward, for all the qualities which make for mutation, for progress. Without this, creation would have remained in embryo. There would not have been that eager pushing-upward-into-new-life which we call evolution. God did not create only in the beginning. He rather planted his creative will and force, his breath of life, within his creation which has ever after been fashioned into higher creation through the process he designed, whenever his will and purpose could be realized.

The second urge is equally necessary to the divine

# A Pastoral Prayer

**By ANDREW LEITCH**

OUR FATHER who art in heaven, we thank Thee that Thou art a God of abundant loving-kindness and tender mercies, that Thou desirest not that any should perish but that all might come unto Thee. In this sacred hour we are grateful for the height and the depth and the breadth and the infinite reaches of Thy redeeming love as revealed unto us in Jesus Christ our Lord, whom Thou didst send that we might come to know Thee, whom to know is life eternal. We thank Thee for the majesty of his life, for the inspiration of his teachings, for the glory of his church, for the joy and the hope of his gospel.

Our minds go back to the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane, and to his supreme sacrifice on Calvary, where he gave himself unto the uttermost, not because of any sin or transgression of his own but because upon him was laid the iniquity of us all. We are awed in mind and heart by the sublimity of his sacrifice. Help us, we beseech Thee, to be truly humble. Inspire within us a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation for this priceless gift. Give unto us the joy of those who know that they have been redeemed. Fill our lives with his spirit of good will toward all mankind.

May we by our lives confess our faith in him whose coming was heralded so many years ago by the very angels in heaven. May we this day reconsecrate our lives to his service. Help us, as we go forth into a new year, so to live that we shall be true to the vows which we have made. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

plan. It is not enough to push into higher life adventurously, however divine that may be. There must come the conserving of the new gains. The individual cannot conserve creative values in himself. If they do not become vital for all of life, for the whole of the creation, they cannot survive. The individual must therefore merge his life along with his achievements in a group, race or species so that both may endure. But even the racial or group consolidation must be vital for the entire creation if it is to endure. This urge for interdependence, for unity, for organization is as necessary in God's continued creativity as the passion to adventure in new, uncharted tracks. Both are of God and both are necessary, in balance, to the realization of his fuller creativity.

### *TWO GREAT SCOURGES*

Let us now see how these life-giving urges can become the two great scourges of mankind.

Without a sense of dependence upon God this self-assertion becomes overweening, rampant, cruel, lustful in aggrandizement, forgetful of others and finally destructive of all values. The self-assertion of the past power age appears like the horrible mental aberration of a creature of noble proportion and splendid endowments which has now run amuck and is destroying all who loved and nurtured it into life.

The other-regarding urge without God, instead of making for an interdependence which conserves values in the creation, becomes the blind conformity chaining men to the past, enslaving the soul and making further progress impossible; or it becomes the worship of the group itself in which the seemingly spectacular progress of genus-over-all turns out to be the way of death. Here we have the occasion for stratified caste, entrenched privilege, ossified religion, dead forms, the sacrifice of life's blood to preserve all these dead things, and finally over all the musty odor of decay.

Balance between these two urges seems impossible to the higher creation, man, as long as God's part in the creation is not understood by man and consciously fulfilled by him. This is the prime requisite, a consciousness of God and of his purpose which will enable us to know our own true nature and how he works in us his will for his higher creation.

This futility of the creation, which Paul says is within the divine plan, is therefore our great hope! We may well rejoice when we see that even the greatest civilization, if it tries to go on without God, is driven back upon itself in utter defeat. Only so can God tutor his world into the true sense of its dependence upon his Spirit. What we must remember is that God made all creation to express his will. He made us for himself. The "entire creation sighs and throbs with pain" because he is not in it.

### *THE SONS OF GOD*

By birth into sonship, which God's Spirit provides, we can take our place with those who redeem the world. In this revelation of sons we can see the purpose of God in his plan of creation and the probable reason for the creation itself. When creation has given birth to these true sons of God, says Paul, then it will fulfilled God's purpose. "Even the creation waits eager longing for the sons of God to be revealed." we know that we are sons of God and that G using us to fulfill his creation?

The passage, Romans 8, tells how the "law o spirit" brings this knowledge of sonship and insur application "in everything." We are first introd to ourselves as sons. (8:17) There can be no deception. We are henceforth guided by the Spir God. (8:14) This spirit becomes the tenor of minds. Sons are those guided by the Spirit of "Anyone who does not possess the spirit of Christ not belong to him." (8:9) "So too the Spirit assis in our weakness; for we do not know how to aright, but the Spirit pleads for us with sighs tha beyond words, and he who searches the human h knows what is in the mind of the Spirit." (8:26

Finally, we are told in verse 28 that "those love God, those who have been called in terms o purpose, have his aid and interest in everything." can identify ourselves beyond all doubt; we can ourselves. Do we depend upon God's aid in ev thing? Do we make his interest our own?

### *'KINGDOM OF ALL HUMANITY'*

Let us see how Jesus revealed his sonship. Di have God's "aid and interest in everything"? H his face to go to Jerusalem against the wishes o closest friends. He was thus setting himself ag every soul-enslaving Jewish-Roman custom of his and he paid the full price for his conviction and cou This was his divine self-assertion: he was loyal to ought to be, not to what had come to be. God's int and God's aid are always in what ought to be.

And yet, over against the relative kingdoms of m desires, and the clashing collectivisms of their l loves, Jesus also set a kingdom of all humanity, a k dom in which those means are treasured which e and enhance human life. The holy city descen through him, "from God out of heaven . . . G dwelling-place . . . with men . . . his people . . . God . . . himself . . . with them." He said we always to pray, "Thy will be done as in heaven on earth."

Paul commends to us this example of our Ma for had not God long ago decreed that sons "sh share the likeness of his Son—that he might be firstborn of a great brotherhood"? (8:29) Is not brotherhood the beloved community?

Is this, then, only the beautiful promise of somet that is to come outside of this life or after this eart God's creativity has thwarted his will and destr itself? Not according to Paul. It is the "redemp of the body that means our full sonship." (8:23) this the creation waits for, redemption not outsid physical existence but within it. "We were saved this hope in view," he adds. The "great brotherh of the little brothers of Christ was the new rea "the secret purpose which after the silence of ages has now been disclosed." (Romans 16:26) was withheld from no age since the beginning, nei

been realized by any fully. But I believe that nity today is closer at hand than ever before in history. Is that why the ax is laid at the root tree? Every tree that beareth not *this* fruit will n down and cast into the fire.

poem, "Each in His Own Tongue," by William , is one of the most beautiful poems in the Eng- guage, and no words more beautiful than these:

Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a face turned from the clod—
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

you not sense the full meaning of this passage great apostle? You are an immortal son of God you know yourself! The face turned from the clod is the face of a son of God! You stand up out of the creation, God's creative breath of life in you. Having had the power to flaunt and drive out God, the creation "sighs and throbs with pain." Can you not see it? Can you sense your position, standing up out of that?

But you are God's child! Never forget that. Your face is upward but your destiny is not outside of that creation. He beckons you upward but not out of that. In its throbbing of pain it begins to sigh for its maker. Are you aware of the world's cry? You are to be the savior, Christ in you, for the one who so loved the world that he gave this spirit into the world that the world might have life. "Even the creation waits with eager longing for the sons of God to be revealed."

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nt, R. D.: "Freedom Is a Dangerous ng" (May)
on, C. E.: "Dr. Fosdick in Missouri" t.)
Lilje, Hans: "Past and Future in the Light of the Bible" (Feb.)
Macartney, C. E.: "The Unchangeable Christ" (Dec.)
Malone, J. W.: "Putting Reality Into Religion" (Sept.)
McAfee, R. C.: "Life Triumphant Over Death" (April)
McKeehan, H. D.: "Raised Values" (July)
McKelvey, J. W.: "What Shall I Do Then with Jesus?" (March)
McCartney, A. J.: "The Unknown Soldier of World War II Has His Say" (Nov.)
Megahey, Thomas: "The Undiscouraged Christ" (April); "How Far Is It to Bethlehem?" (Dec.)
Merrill, Boynton: "This Night—Thy Soul" (Feb.)
Moody, W. R.: "Peace Is Our Business" (July)
Mueller, F. F.: "The Happy Nation" (July)
Nicely, H. E.: "The Principle of the Extra Measure" (Feb.)
Nichols, G. S.: "Believe Also in Me" (Aug.)
Petrie, J. C.: "Wherein Is Our Hope?" (Jan.)
Pruden, E. H.: "Your Place in History" (May)
Reighard, Edward: "Radar—and Religion" (March)
Rhein, V. M.: "The Church in the World Today" (Jan.)
Rupert, Hoover: "Beauty for Ashes" (Jan.)
Schwartz, B. F.: "My Father Is a Worker" (Sept.)
Schwarz, L. E.: "The Lost Week End" (Oct.)
Sharp, F. A.: "Celestial Reckoning" (June)
Shearman, E. J.: "Four New Notes in Religion" (Oct.)
Simcox, C. E.: "Beauty for Ashes" (Dec.)
Smith, R. J.: "You Can't Go Home Again" (June)
Sockman, R. W.: "How Easy Is Evil?" (April)
Spaulding, C. A.: "Streamlined" (June)
Tawes, R. L.: "Gamblers at the Cross" (March)
Templin, Ralph: "An Expectant World and the Sons of God" (Dec.)
Thomas, W. N.: "An Old Power for a New Age" (March)
Tittle, E. F.: "Prayer" (March)
Traver, A. J.: "The Happy Pure" (Aug.)
Walenta, P. P.: "The Peace Which Passeth Understanding" (Aug.)
Watkins, Gerald: "Is It God's Will?" (Sept.)
Weatherhead, L. D.: "On Accepting Life" (Jan.)
Wilkie, G. D.: "The Peril of Not Looking Back" (July)
Wishart, A. W.: "What They Missed" (Aug.)
Ziegler, E. K.: "The Light That Never Failed" (April)


## Preacher Problems


Ervin, G. C.: "Pitching and Preaching" (Sept.)
Hewitt, A. W.: "The Preacher's Emotional Weather" (Aug.)
Holmes, J. H.: "Preaching and Religion Today" (Jan.)
Jordan, G. Ray: "The Kind of Evangelist I Want to Be" (July)
Luccock, R. E.: "Avoiding the Preaching Slump" (Nov.)
Mead, S. E.: "Tomorrow's Minister" (June)
Morrison, J. D.: "The Preacher's Use of Poetry" (Feb.)
Rich, Mark: "The Minister and the Productive Home" (May)
Seidenspinner, Clarence: "Variety in Holy Communion" (Dec.)
Smith, H. B.: "Compensations of the Christian Ministry" (April)
Stidger, W. L.: "Illustrations—Windows for Dark Towers" (Oct.)
Straton, H. H.: "Evangelism for Our Time" (March)


## Sermons for Children


Fishbach, Julius, "Old Glory" (July)
Foster, V. E.: "Why Do We Have Easter?" (April)
Jeschke, R. P.: "Worth More Than Money" (Oct.)
Lee, W. H.: "The Invincible Armada" (June)
Schooley, H. H.: "The Island of Nightingales" (May)
Weist, C. S.: "Prisms and Rainbows" (Feb.)


## Book of the Month


Buttrick, G. A.: "Christ and Man's Dilemma" (May); "Victory Over Fear" (Oct.)
Committee of Scholars: "Revised Standard Version of the New Testament" (March)
Fosdick, H. E.: "On Being Fit to Live With" (Dec.)
Garnett, A. C.: "God In Us" (Feb.)
Hutchinson, Paul: "The New Leviathan" (April)
Knox, John: "Christ the Lord" (Jan.)
Lewis, C. S.: "The Great Divorce" (Nov.)
Scott, C. A.: "Romanism and the Gospel" (June)
Scott, E. F.: "Man and Society in the New Testament" (Sept.)
Sperry, W. L.: "Those of the Way" (Aug.)
Trueblood, Elton: "Foundations for Reconstruction" (July)
Wedel, T. O.: "The Coming Great Church" (Oct.)


## Pastoral Prayers


Backemeyer, Frederick W. (April)
Beach, King D. (March)
Bond, Ahva J. C. (May)
French, Porter (Oct.)
Helfenstein, Roy C. (Feb., June)
Hodgson, Chester E. (Sept.)
Hoskinson, Charles C. (July)
Hudson, Winthrop S. (Nov.)
Leitch, Andrew (Dec.)
Perkins, James C. (Jan.)
Wingfield, Marshall (Aug.)



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# Variety in Holy Communion

By CLARENCE SEIDENSPINNER

IN A GOOD many churches the celebration of Holy Communion is a melancholy experience. Some people frankly stay at home when this sacrament is scheduled on the calendar. "It is too sad," they say, "or too boring," or "I don't understand what the service is all about," or "It's the same thing over and over again." It is not uncommon to discover people who enter the nave, take a surprised look at the chancel where the elements are ready for the sacramental service, and then leave the church for another one where a preaching service is scheduled. Admittedly, the service of Holy Communion is none too popular in the Protestant church.

One reason for this attitude on the part of our laity—and the clergy also—is the fact that the service is put on a purely mechanical basis. Once every quarter it is "administered," like medicine, in the same old dull, unimaginative way. The laymen who protest that the service is sad, boring or unintelligible are often quite right. When placed upon the basis of sheer routine there is no chance for the service to reflect those important facets of beauty and variety, of wonder and meaning, which it possesses in such great abundance. What the Protestant service of Holy Communion needs is a new sense of wonder and variety.

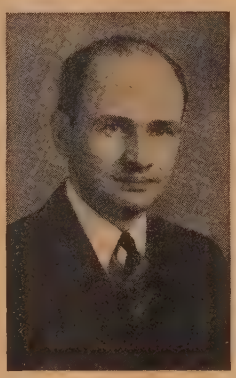
### ● *Current Neglect of Holy Communion*

It is remarkable that our clergy, who exercise such unusual initiative in the business administration of the modern church, should have stripped this superb sacrament of its color and significance. Perhaps this is because they have never examined its antecedents. One cannot properly evaluate his own observance of the Lord's Supper until he knows the earliest form of this service now being generally used: the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom of the Orthodox Church. Most certainly, such knowledge is not for the purpose of adaptation or imitation, but rather for the purpose of understanding the broad scope and sense of wonder and mystery which the service possessed in its earliest conception.

In the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, sacrifice of Christ upon Calvary is not emphasized to the extent that it is in the Roman mass. The Orthodox service has the entire creation for its base, all the gifts of God to mankind which are present in such profusion: corn and wine and the glory of nature; saints and heroes and the scriptures of antiquity; but most of all, Jesus Christ and the church which forms his ever-living body. For all of these benefactions, the service offers appropriate thanksgivings to deity. That is why it is often called the "Eucharist." Because there is gratitude in the hearts of celebrant and congregation, there are glory and wonder in the service.

### ● *Wonder and Color in the Liturgy*

Protestant ministers might well study this liturgy in an English translation and then visit the service itself. If they have the time or inclination,



CLARENCE SEIDENSPINNER

they might view it in the most superb of all liturgical settings, the midnight Easter celebration of the Orthodox Church. Here the childlike wonder of the early Christian community, which contemplated the resurrection, is again revealed: the ritualistic removal of the tomb of Jesus from the nave to the sanctuary behind the iconostatis, the dramatic announcement that Christ has arisen, the procession of clergy and choristers around the church while the bells are pealed, the illumination of the nave with a thousand sparkling lights—then the glorious celebration of the sacrament itself.

Having now studied the Orthodox service with an eye to the matter of more meaning and variety in his own, the Protestant minister may now turn to the Roman mass. Here he come upon a device that makes for stability and variety in the se It is known as the Ordinary an Proper of the mass. The Ordin the mass constitutes the basic ture of the service that is use after day and week after wee includes such elements as the g confession, the Nicene Creed an prayers of consecration. The P of the mass changes every wee every holy day. Included in the P are: the introit, the epistle gradual, the gospel, the offe the secret, the communion post-communion prayers. As church year progresses, wee week, through Advent, Christma Epiphanytide and the other litu seasons, a rich variety of emphas made possible by these ever-cha portions of the mass.

### ● *Imagin Is Ne*

This is supplemented, of cour the major liturgical changes o great seasons. The preface o Sanctus changes with each new s and festival, as do other portio the Ordinary. Changing, too, a vestments and colors of altar clergy as the seasons come and g these ways the mass is kept varied and relevant to the worsh interests and needs.

When the Protestant mi understands what the old, hi churches do with the Lord's Su he will be in a better position to what his own church can do w Certainly, he will hardly be co with a routine quarterly obser that lacks all touch of imagi and change. What could be mor than to go through this sacred once every three months just be a new quarter has appeared? A very least, the quarterly obser can be given a thematic emphasis. minister may take the lesson fo day and relate it in terms of in meditation, penitence or commi to the blessed sacrament. Su thematic emphasis will bring color and meaning and contempo ousness to the service.

It is better to celebrate Holy munion according to the dra movement of the liturgical year. plan will give the service a v and emphasis it otherwise never acquire, for it then take the particular color and tonal q of the season itself.

### ● *Suggestions for the Nativity Season*

ppose that one begin with the vity, the first festival of the . Why not begin Christmastide Holy Communion on Christmas Since the festival of the Nativ- joyous, Holy Communion during season will be joyous too. It will est the note of adoration and will the worshipers an opportunity to e the Christ-child. Beauty and are brought to the service in dance. The holy table is illumi- l by the silvered light of candles. val flowers—golden roses, white ations or red poinsettias—adorn the re-table behind it. Perhaps nave is sparkling in candlelight. ly old carols and hymns are sung horisters and congregation; the el story from Luke is read with heavenly antiphons resounding ugh the night. A beautiful choral ng for the liturgy proper is pro- l; perhaps the St. Cecelia music— o, Sanctus and Benedictus, Agnus —is used. The service is filled joy as the experience of adora- is emphasized by all that is said done.

hen Ash Wednesday arrives, the l changes. Festival colors are ged to penitential violet. Flowers nger adorn the altar. The peni- al psalms are read and the hymns ntrition are sung. Emphasis in iturgy is placed upon the general ession and absolution. During the nunion itself, the worshiper is d to make an act of self-exam- on and personal confession.

### ● *Memorial of the Lord's Supper*

ven the name of the service may hanged on Maundy Thursday. It be spoken of as "A Simple Observance of the Lord's Supper." Again the altar is bare except for the two eucharistic candles. No choral setting ought to be used on this night. The whole emphasis is that of memory, for this is the memorial of Jesus' last meal with his disciples, the memorial that spans nineteen Christian centuries and takes us back to the upper room and the establishment of the supper sacrament. Hymns, lessons and meditation will all make this simple emphasis. The whole congregation will become, again, part of the apostolic group who wondered, waited and watched with Jesus that night.

If Holy Communion is celebrated on Easter or its octave, the mood changes again, for Easter is the second festival of the deity. Again the festival colors and decorations are in place. Again there may be a brilliant musical setting which sounds the notes of thanksgiving and adoration, for Christ the Lord is now risen.

### ● *The Birthday of the Church*

Whitsunday, the third great festival of the deity, brings us to the birthday of the church. Certainly no church will want to let this day go by without a celebration of Holy Communion. This sacrament is one service which Christendom has in common. It may be known as the mass by Roman Catholics, as the Divine Liturgy by Eastern Catholics, as Holy Eucharist by Anglicans, as the Lord's Supper by Baptists and as Holy Communion by Lutherans, but in all of these services bread and wine are consecrated and consumed. There is a Holy Communion that takes place. What a wonderful service this provides on the birthday of the church! Presbyterians and Lutherans, Methodists and Anglicans are all united by this common act on the day when the old lesson of Pentecost is read concerning the common origin of them all. Since this celebration is that of a birthday emphasis, again the mood is festive, the music glorifies the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, and the note of thanksgiving is sounded.

Many other celebrations will need to be made throughout the year, each one with its own emphasis. On the first Sunday in October churches unite in the observance of World Communion Sunday. Such an occasion makes possible the emphasis of fellowship. Here is a service which unites us one and all in the communion of the Body of Christ. Hymns and lessons are used which reflect the fellowship of Christians. This same note of fellowship may be used by the celebration of the sacrament at the beginning of the calendar year of the church. It may also help to knit together a youth group, a men's group, or some other group in the church. Upon such occasions again there is emphasized the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.

### ● *Commitment and Dedication*

Upon other occasions the service can be made a means of commitment and dedication, either for some group within the church or for the entire congregation. Then the hymns, lessons and meditation will all point toward that moment of communion when each worshiper makes his personal dedication to the living Christ who is present in the service.

When the Protestant minister once understands the nature of this wonderful sacrament, he will sense its opportunity for variety. He will also understand that there is scarcely any significant moment which may arise during the course of the year which cannot best be met by the service which our Lord ordained.

## *'Come, Follow Me'*

ATHWART the jangling of our creeds is heard,
From out the past, one calm, clear word;
A Son of Wisdom walked beside the sea
And said unto his friends, 'Come, follow Me.'

And they who rose and followed left behind
Their small disputes. Slow yielding to his mind,
They found a master purpose. He was King,
Whose love had lured them from their trafficking.

How foolish we who set against an age
Distraught and lost our creedal heritage!
There stands a world of hate, of vision dim:
That we might speak to them, 'Come, follow Him!'

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

# • WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

HAVING *received his later education at the University of North Dakota and at Oberlin Theological Seminary, Rev.* CARROLL E. SIMCOX *began his ministry in the mission field of the Episcopal diocese of Minnesota; he was rector of St. Paul's Church, Owatonna, Minn., 1939-42; and since then he has been student chaplain at the University of Illinois and the University of Wisconsin. He is now chaplain of St. Francis House, the Epsicopal student church at the University of Wisconsin.*

*For the past eleven years Rev.* MATTHEW C. CAVELL *has ministered at First Presbyterian Church, Evansville, Ind.; an earlier pastorate was at Avondale Church, Cincinnati. Educated at Lafayette College, Union Theological Seminary, Columbia and New York University, he was awarded his Ph.D. from the latter institution.*

*Rev.* EDWARD C. DAHL *is minister of Centre Congregational Church, Brattleboro, Vt.; he went to Brattleboro from Northfield, Mass., where he ministered at the Trinitarian Congregational Church for three years. He attended Harvard University, Union Theological Seminary and Yale Divinity School, graduating from Yale in 1941.*

*Rev.* DANA MCLEAN GREELEY *is minister of* Arlington Street Church in Boston.

*Since 1917 Rev.* CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY *has* ministered at First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. During the past thirty years he has been writing and pu lishing books. Among his recent volumes are *Six Kings the American Pulpit, The Lord's Prayer, Great Nigh of the Bible, Great Interviews of Jesus,* and *Macartne Illustrations.* He was at one time moderator of the Pre byterian Church in the U. S. A.

*Rev.* THOMAS MEGAHEY *is minister of Faith Pre* byterian Church, Chicago, having come to Chicago abo a year ago from Third Presbyterian Church in Dubuq Iowa. He was born in Ireland and came to this country a youth. He is a graduate of Dubuque University and t Presbyterian Seminary in Dubuque.

*Rev.* RALPH TEMPLIN *was a missionary of t* Methodist Church in India from 1925 to 1940, but he w recalled from India, along with other missionaries of t same mission, for a stand against imperialism as the cau of the Second World War. From 1941 to 1945 he w director of the School of Living in Suffern, N. Y., a scho devoted to the development of a more normal life on t land. Since leaving Suffern he has been preparing develop a community training center at Yellow Sprin Ohio, where he is also assisting Arthur Morgan in movement through Community Service, Inc.

*Dr.* ANDREW LEITCH *is head of the department* psychology at Bethany College, Bethany, W. Va.

*Rev.* CLARENCE SEIDENSPINNER *is minister of t* First Methodist Church, Racine, Wis.

# TITLES AND TEXTS

## What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

FRANK L. BROWN, First Methodist, Ada, Ohio. "The Road of Loving Hearts." John 14:6a—"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way . . ."

WYBURN SKIDMORE, Memorial, Seward, Alaska. "Christ and a Perishing World." John 3:16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

J. PAUL COLEMAN, Bethel Methodist, Chowchilla, Cal. "A Synonym for God." John 14:9—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

ERNEST C. PARRISH, Community Presbyterian, Brigham, Utah. "In the Steps of Christ." 1 Pet. 2:21—"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .

*Title of sermon*

. . . . . .

*Text used (write out the text)*

. . . . . .

*Name of minister*

. . . . . .

*Name of church*

. . . . . .

*Address*

G. W. EPPEHEIMER, Methodist, N. Wales, Pa. "Unco ditional Surrender." Luke 22:42—"Not my will, b thine be done."

JOHN C. PRYOR, First Congregational, Weeping Wate Neb. "Nothing Succeeds Like Failure." John 21:3-4 "That night they took nothing. But when day was no breaking Jesus stood on the beach."

W. W. WITTE, First Presbyterian, Englishtown, N. "The Universal Epiphany of Grace." Titus 2:11—"F the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appear to all men."

H. H. WAGNER, Trinity Methodist, Springfield, Ma "Adding Living to Our Years." John 10:10b—"I can that they might have life, and may have it abundantly

R. R. GOERING, First Mennonite, McPherson, Ka "Making Light of Things That Matter." Matt. 22:4 —"Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, T them which are bidden . . . But they made light of and went their ways."

L. E. HIGGINS, First Congregational, Sylvania, Ohio. Jerusalem Exposure." Dan. 6:10—"His windows b ing open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneel upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, a gave thanks before his God."

W. F. LAHR, Second Evangelical and Reformed, India apolis, Ind. "God Speaks My Language." Acts 2:8 "We hear every man in our own tongue where we were born."

# THE EDITOR'S PAGE

## The Event of the Month

WO MORE denominations have now added their union to the growing list of church mergers. They are the United Brethren and the Evangel- churches. Their union was formally consummated ohnstown, Pennsylvania, November 16, in a "unit- ing conference" representing the two bodies. The name of the united church is "Evan- gelical United Brethren." Its ıbership will be about 750,000, of which, roughly, third is contributed by the Evangelical church and -thirds by the United Brethren. Five thousand gregations are involved and nearly 4,000 ministers. extraordinary feature of this union is the fact that a single congregation of either group remained ide and not one minister! This would seem to olish a record! Anyhow, no other merger of rches has ever surpassed it! These two churches had much in common. They both originated in nsylvania at the beginning of the nineteenth cen- . Their constituencies were at first chiefly drawn the German American communities of that state. ir present strength is chiefly in Pennsylvania and o, though scattered congregations are found in y other states. Both have the same general type of nization—not essentially different from that of thodism. The new church conforms to this polity. bishops of each denomination—four from the ngelicals and five from the United Brethren—now me the bishops of the united church. The theo- cal tradition of both groups could probably be d Arminian, though a slight vestige of "total avity" still clings to some of the former United thren!—just enough to give spice to a Monday ning ministers' meeting! The new church proposes aintain high educational standards for its ministry.

**Other Merger of o Churches**

## The Book of the Month

BEING FIT TO LIVE WITH. *By Harry Emerson osdick. Harpers, $2.00.*

R. FOSDICK signalizes the close of his great ministry at Riverside Church, New York, with the publication of another book of sermons. ether it is his final literary contribution to this high- vocation in the world, a vocation which he has d to a level of dignity and power unmatched by preacher of his generation, I do not know. But I sure that his voice will continue to ring its chal- ging message from many pulpits and platforms as g as he lives. The title of this volume is taken from first sermon in it. The reader may expect another chological treatment of personality such as that of best seller volume, *On Being a Real Person,* but will soon discover that the point of view in this k is not that of psychology but of the Christian pel. Dr. Fosdick's genius is rooted in two penetrat- ing insights: (1) his almost uncanny sense of the thoughts that circulate in the minds of his contempo- raries, and (2) his profound understanding of the Christian faith. He never preaches at random—he always has a target to shoot at, nobody goes away saying, so what? Fosdick always rings the bell in both the conscience and the intelligence. He is out for a verdict, and he gets it. The verdict he demands is that men shall take Jesus Christ and the Christian faith seriously, that is, as supremely relevant to the public life of the world and the private experience of the individual person. I would direct special attention to the sermon entitled "Are We a Part of the Problem or a Part of the Answer?" To those overborne with despair at the state of the world, this sermon brings new life.

## A Thought for the Month

CHRISTIANITY seems to move by a kind of rhythm. It has its ups and downs in the world, its periods of calm and storm, its restful, com- fortable, hopeful seasons, and then its crises when there is confusion and anxiety and fear. Our Lord intended to prepare us for this rhythmic movement when he likened his Kingdom in one place to leaven which works silently in the meal, and at another place to the thief who comes suddenly in the night. He warns us against complacency when all seems to be going well and the Kingdom is appar- ently making steady progress. "Beware," he says, "when all men speak well of you." When the world speaks well of the church and seems to fall in approv- ingly with the church's ideas and purposes, that is a time to look within and to look deep down into the foundations. Perhaps the church has given hostages to the world, perhaps it has made a too comfortable adjustment to secular society, perhaps the world's favor is not due to improvement on the world's part but to the relaxing of the church's witness. Our Lord intended to prepare us for such crises when he told Simon Peter that Satan would sift him as wheat. A crisis is sifting time. Christendom is in such a crisis today. What disillusionment the world situation is bringing to the church with respect to the comfortable adjustments it has enjoyed for many generations! God is shocking his church into consciousness; he is sifting his people. The gospel has grown commonplace in our hearts. But now we begin to see how precious it is, and how the whole destiny of civilization hangs upon our faithful witness to realities which we had come to take almost for granted. We seem to have been walking in a kind of dream while the world has been steadily drifting away from the only truth by which mankind can be saved.

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Charles Clayton Morrison

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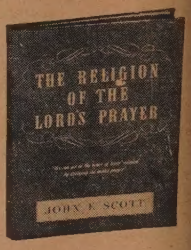


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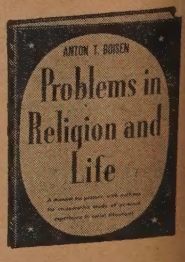


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